

# Department of Auditor-Controller

## Children's Group Home Ombudsman Activity Report

**April 2013**

Total Calls	<u>20</u>	General Statistics	
		Youth Callers	Time of Youth Calls
Calls returned within one business day	<u>20</u>	Female <u>9</u>	AM <u>5</u>
Calls resolved within 30 business days	<u>20</u>	Male <u>5</u>	PM <u>9</u>
Follow-up calls	<u>55</u>		
		Total Youth Callers <u>14</u>	
		Total Adult Callers <u>6</u>	

### CALLS RELATING TO:

#### Collaboration Contacts/Referrals/Information

Probation referral	<u>2</u>
DCFS	<u>9</u>
DCFS - CPHL	<u>2</u>
Group Home	<u>1</u>
General Inquiries	<u>6</u>
TOTAL:	<u>20</u>

#### Personal Rights

<u>        </u> Allowance	<u>1</u> Health/Med, Dental, Psych Care (Crittenton)
<u>        </u> Clothing/Personal Property	<u>        </u> Respect
<u>2</u> Contact (David & Margaret; Macro Homes)	<u>1</u> School/Community/Religious Svcs (Eggleston)
<u>2</u> Food (Crittenton)	<u>        </u> Social/Family Contact
<u>        </u> Living Condition and Respect	<u>        </u> Work/Job Skills
TOTAL: <u>        </u> <u>6</u>	

#### Personal

<u>        </u> Crime-related	<u>1</u> Physical Abuse/Harm (Childhelp - Riverside County)
<u>        </u> Discipline	<u>1</u> Fear, Threats, Intimidation (Dream Home Care)
<u>        </u> Discrimination	<u>        </u> Relationship
<u>1</u> Emotional Issues (Vista Del Mar)	<u>        </u> Sexual Abuse
<u>        </u> Pregnancy/Infant Care	<u>        </u> Substance Abuse
TOTAL: <u>        </u> <u>3</u>	

#### Other

<u>3</u> CSW- related (Dream Catcher; David & Margaret- 2 calls)	<u>1</u> Placement concerns (Vista Del Mar)
<u>1</u> Internet Access (Careprovider)	
TOTAL: <u>        </u> <u>5</u>	

**SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION MEETING**  
**May 15, 2013**  
**Reporting for the month of April 2013**

**AWOLs:** There were **148** AWOLs involving **117** youth: 21 youth AWOL'd more than once, with some AWOL'ing between 2 to 6 times.

<b>49</b> remain AWOL	<b>0</b> TERM
<b>35</b> returned to GH	<b>2</b> HOP
<b>24</b> are in JH	<b>7</b> CCP

**Outstanding AWOL's from previous months detained in April 2013:**

**13** youth were arrested/detained on an outstanding bench warrant from previous months: 6 are currently in JH, 2 are in GHs, 2 are in Camp, 2 are on CDP, 1 has AWOL'd again.

**Statistics and Findings regarding AWOLs in April 2013:**

- 1) 53% of the AWOL incidents were Hispanic males with a mean age of 16.8 years. The overall average age of youth who AWOL'd in April was 16.8 years. Additional stats:

19%- Black males with an average age of 17.1 years.  
15%- Hispanic females with an average age of 16.7 years.  
8%- Black females with an average age of 16.7 years.  
3%- White males with an average age of 16.7 years.  
1%- "Other" race females with an age of 15.9 years.  
1%- White females with an average age of 15.7 years.

*Recommendation:*

- For the past 9 months, the average age and majority race of AWOL'd youth remained about the same. Therefore, for all 9 months, Hispanic males above the age of 16 were around 40% to 50% of AWOL incidents. This statistic may likely be a representation of the general population of LA County. However, DPOs, Therapists, or other GH and County staff, should interview at-risk youth (mainly Hispanic males around the age of 16) to find out about certain feelings related to age, gender, or cultural stresses and consider possible solutions to decrease these feelings/stresses.
  - Inform DPOs and GH staff to be aware of the demographics that are at most risk of AWOLing. Research and identify possible methods or daily practices of assisting youth to come to a less stressful state of mind.
- 2) In the previous months, a correlation was detected between the time youth AWOLs and the time it takes for the GH to report the incident and whether or not the youth remains AWOL'd or is detained). To illustrate:

Correlation between these factors (dashes represent passing time, whereas, more dashes represent a longer period of time):

**Time Awol'd-----Time Reported-----Youth is detained either in a GH or JH.**

Time Awol'd-----Time Reported-----  
Youth is still AWOL-----

Based on statistical findings, *the sooner the GH reports the AWOL, the more likely it is that the Youth is detained within the end of the month.* For efficiency, we can call the passing period between the AWOL incident and the notification to authorities of the incident the “**Idle Phase.**” **Idle Phase or IP can be defined as duration of time passed between any two actions.** Certain actions are dependent on each other for progress or success. In this case, the two actions are the reporting of the AWOL by the GH and the detainment of the youth. In April, youth who were detained the same month they AWOL'd had an average IP of 0.75 days (AWOL was reported within 0.75 days). For youth who remain AWOL, the IP was 1.23 days (it took 1.23 days for the group home to report AWOL). Therefore, there was strong indication this month that youth who were reported AWOL sooner, were also detained sooner.

*Recommendation:*

- Continue monitoring monthly trends to verify a continuing trend. Up to this month, 7 to 8 months out of the 9 months tracked have shown this continuing correlation.
  - Reiterate to GH staff and to legal guardians of youth the importance of reporting an AWOL as soon as the incident occurs. Specifically, all AWOLs should be reported within 24 hours in order to expedite the issuance of a bench warrant and the recovery of the youth. Statistics should be shared with GH staff to illustrate the real results of delayed reporting.
- 3) As with previous months, certain GHs showed a higher percentage of AWOLs than other GHs. This was determined by taking the number of AWOLs for that month and comparing it to the number of beds available in the GH (population). It is important to note that some GHs had the same youth AWOL'ing several times, but these AWOLs were all counted. **For April 2013, some GHs had a 30% or higher AWOL rate:**

*Recommendation:*

- Continue to track the frequency of AWOLs for each GH and see if a consistent pattern remains amongst the same group homes.
  - Several confounding factors have to be controlled to identify a direct correlation between GH treatment of youth and AWOLs. For example, a high AWOL rate for a GH could only mean that that particular GH gets higher risk youth.
  - Investigate GHs that have an unusually high number of AWOLs compared to other GHs to see possible reasons.
  - Interview youth during investigation.
  - Create a plan of action based on results (directives for GH, staff training, etc).
  - Monitor GH to see if trend has stopped after implementation of programs or directives.
- 4) This month, there was a weaker (compared to previous months) correlation found related to IP between bench warrant requests and bench warrant issued and effect on youth detainment (**IP- duration of time passed between two**

**actions; see item #2 for explanation).** The sooner the bench warrant was issued, the higher the chances were of the youth being detained by the end of the month. However, identifying that the youth who were detained had bench warrants issued sooner than those who were not detained, could just also mean that majority of bench warrants are issued sooner than later, within Probation operations, overall. This month, 5 youth were detained for bench warrants issued within 1 day of request, 7 detained when issued within 2 days of request, 3 detained when issued within 3 days of request, 1 detained when issued within 4 days of request, 2 within 5 days.

*Recommendation:*

- Regardless of strong or weak correlations, consider the importance of having a bench warrant issued as soon as possible for an AWOL'd youth. The sooner a bench warrant is issued, the more likely it is that the youth will be detained by the end of the month.
- 5) Similar to the previous month, a query was done to find if out if there was relationship between AWOLs and a lack of contact with DPO in the first seven business days of SP. For April, 53 of the AWOLs were youth who had face to face contact within the first 7 days. 66 of the AWOLs were youth who had a face to face contact after 7 days. 29 had no face to contact prior to AWOLing. As mentioned in the previous month, there was a spike in AWOLs in the first 3 days of placement. Overall, there seems to be no pattern or relationship found between AWOL behavior and DPO contact (consistent with the previous month).

*Recommendation:*

- Continue tracking this data to see how it fluctuates. However, if a lack of correlations/patterns continues, stop tracking this data.
- 6) Patterns regarding suitable placement dates and AWOL dates were also noted. Here is the data for April 2013:

April 2013:

19% AWOL'd within 7 days of SP  
9% AWOL'd between 7 and 14 days of SP  
9% AWOL'd between 14 and 21 days of SP  
11% AWOL'd between 21 and 30 days of SP  
52% AWOL'd after 30 days in SP

- 7) **Final Remarks on AWOLs:** Similar to last month, all 'insignificant' AWOLs were also incorporated into the data this month (i.e. youth AWOL'ing for an hour). Therefore, the findings/correlations may have slightly shifted in different patterns compared to previous months. However, certain trends relating to race, age, and sex continued to mirror the previous months' data. DPO and number of AWOLs per DPO were also tracked, but not included in this report. There are other trends that could be revealed, such as correlation between Gang affiliation and AWOLing or incidents.

There were no child deaths or suicide attempts reported for the month of December in iTrack. The largest category for SIRs continued to be "other", providing no description of the type of incident the youth was involved in.

*Recommendation:*

- Instruct all iTrack users to NOT select the category "other," unless incident undeniably does not belong under any specific category. Another option is to remove the category "other," and instead add additional specific categories (once it is determined why users are selecting "other"). Probation is currently discussing improvement ideas regarding iTrack with ISD software managers.

## **GROUP HOME MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS:**

**Current:**

No Group Homes are currently on a HOLD Status

**Child Abuse**, we had 4 referrals, of which, two were **Unfounded**, one for Physical Abuse and the other for Physical Abuse by an 18 year old resident and General Neglect against the GH. The other two referrals are still **Pending** investigation results.

Allegation was **Unfounded** for Physical Abuse. Youth's father alleged that staff slammed his daughter's head during a restraint and that staff used their elbows on the youth's back, arms and legs during the restraints.

Allegation was **Unfounded** for Physical Abuse and General Neglect. Youth was allegedly being harassed by an 18 years old resident at the GH. The referral stated that the youth was at risk for physical abuse and emotional abuse and General Neglect against unspecified GH staff for not doing anything about it.

Allegation is **Pending** for Sexual Abuse and General Neglect. Youth alleged that he and another youth were held down by another unnamed youth and the youth attempted to sexually assault them.

Allegation is **Pending** for General Neglect. Anonymous caller alleged that a youth is not getting enough food or a variety of food and stated that the youth have to earn an upgrade for better food. Caller alleged that the youth are getting the same meal three days in a row.

**Group Home Investigations:**

We had 7 Group Home investigations during the month of April 2013, 2 were **Substantiated**, 3 were **Unfounded**, 2 are **Pending**.

Allegation was **Unfounded**. Youths allegedly engaged in sexual activity at the GH.

Allegation was **Unfounded**. DCFS called Probation to inform that two of their youth were not receiving sufficient clothing or given the option to shop at a regular clothing store, other than the on-site shop. In addition, there was an old mattress that needs to be replaced.

Allegation was **Unfounded**. Youth's Grandmother/LG made numerous allegations against the GH, stating that nine grievances were submitted without result and that her granddaughter's religious rights are being violated.

**Allegation was Substantiated.** GH staff left a youth alone in the facility van for a brief moment with medications in the glove box that the youth subsequently stole three Welbutrin pills and distributed one to another youth.

**Allegation was Substantiated.** SBC made several observations at their last visit regarding the GH being run like a boot camp, no internet is provided, staff are using their own vehicles for transporting the youth, no phone calls for 30 days and that the living room furniture is in poor condition.

**Allegation was Pending.** Youth alleged that he was tackled and choked by a staff while attempting to AWOL from the facility.

**Allegation was Pending.** Youth alleged that a staff threatened to "sock and slap" him and now he is afraid of the staff.

**Monitoring:**

We have **15** posted, **8** are still in various stages of approval, (total of 23 for the 2011-2012 year). Monitoring assignments are well underway for 2012-2013 year.

**Permanency-**

We are in various stages of preparation for **4 potential adoptions** (**2** are in the active phase and **2** are in the planning stages). **1** of the adoptions, parental rights was terminated on March 28, 2013, and the Adoption is scheduled for June 4, 2013, in Department 271.

**5 potential legal guardianships** are currently in the planning stages.

In April 2013, we completed **0** Adoptions and **0** Legal Guardianships.